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THE COLLEGE VOICE

CONNECTICUT COLLEGE'S INDEPENDENT STUDENT NEWSPAPER

PHOTO COURTESY OF
HALLIE CARMEN

PICTURED: THE DANCE CLUB PRESENTS BACKSPACE, A UNIQUE TAKE ON MODERN DANCE. ARTICLE FEATURED ON PAGE 11.

Students, Faculty and Staff to Bring Syrian Task Force to Campus

DANA GALLAGHER
HEAD COPY EDITORAt the
height of
the Syrian
refugee crisis

this year, as many as 10,000 migrants a day sought entry to Europe. Casualties of failed states, these 60 million displaced families and refugees have fled their home countries in numbers not seen since World War II. Syrians account for 34% of migrants destined for Europe. Iraq, Gaza and Afghanistan follow in contributing to the massive diaspora. Unlike past migrant crises, the current situation in Europe features a large scale of arrivals over a short time frame. The movement shows no signs of abating any time soon. In a recent Gallup poll, nearly a quarter of Afghan respondents voiced their desire to leave their country, and more than 100,000 are predicted to flee to Europe by year's end.

While the desire to escape political conflict ranks as a leading factor for migration, the sharp fall in humanitarian funding has

escalated the crisis. The United Nations Syria Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan, an umbrella organization for a number of humanitarian agencies, had received just 37% of the \$4.5 billion needed to sustain its operations for this year as of August. The World Food Program, another United Nations agency, is more than 63% underfunded for 2015. As a result, the agency recently cut its monthly stipend to 211,000 Syrians in its regional refugee camps in half.

Analysts say that families unable to receive assistance at home are more willing to take on the risk of migration. According to Melissa Fleming, chief spokeswoman for the United Nations Refugee Agency, "The conditions are now so bad or overstretched in neighboring countries that the people fleeing Syria are choosing, or have no other choice, but to go straight to Europe."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

Allocating \$5 Million

LUCA POWELL
CO-EDITOR IN CHIEF

What does it mean when the College's athletic department receives \$5 million dollars?

I think, like many of us who first heard the news that twenty million was being gifted, I quickly pictured the donation having immediate impact. A building, a program, a scholarship (this was immediately implemented in the form of the Hale Scholars Program), but something to quantify the growth of our school from this donation, to translate it into a result we could measure up in the NESCAC conference.

The \$5 million dollar allocation to Connecticut College athletics is aimed to improve the College's athletic facilities. Roughly a third of our school is affiliated with a varsity sport, and certainly an even larger portion of the campus community benefits from athletic facilities in general, so what will that actually look like?

Ask any athlete on campus and they'll give you a laundry list of desires. The squash team courts that barely accommodate only a handful of spectators, the disconnected hockey locker rooms that require visiting teams to dress in the central complex, then walk over in their sneakers. Of all these, the absence of real spectator seating on the turf, which affects a range of sports, may figure most highly on student-athletes wish list.

It would be naive of us as students to expect an immediately quantifiable impact from this "largest gift in the College's history." Shields, who has overseen our athletics through a measurable increase in our standings in the NESCAC, stresses that this is a gradual process. With two fall sports teams making it to the NESCAC playoff tournaments just this past weekend, we are underdogs that do well for ourselves.

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Dear Reader,

On some Sunday nights, when the hour draws late and our staff begins to feel the wear of our thankless labor (cough, cough, we're broke), the temptation emerges to send our issue out and just be done with it. It's difficult not to, but I guess we wouldn't have volunteered for this job if weren't drawn to a somewhat masochistic desire for perfectionism, especially when it comes to layout.

It's easy for us to say that this week's issue is one we're truly proud of. A good issue is one that spans a breadth of campus issues, combines both weight and lightness, and puts ideas forward into our community at large. Also, it should have a cover photo that sells itself.

We have Dance Club and Hallie Carmen to thank for one of the coolest front cover photos we've ever published. Equally, our young writers for this issue contributed ideas from such a range of issues, with first-years covering the Conn - New London Relationship, the Syrian refugee crisis, and a sublime reading given by Kiese Laymon this past Tuesday.

To top that off, it is also a first-year that is responsible for the breath of life into our Fiction section. This issue marks the first in a while where we publish a student's short prose - we think you'll enjoy Chloe's piece as much as we did. Shameless plug: we'd like to continue the Fiction section, so dig up the dusty short story you never believed you'd write or that poem into which you channeled all your adolescent woes and send it to us.

As always, thanks for reading our paper, and to whoever left a box of free cookies outside our office this Sunday: you, dear friend, are the real MVP.

- Luca & Dana

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The College Voice meets each week at
9 p.m. on Monday.

Join us.

THE COLLEGE VOICE

"The views and opinions expressed in *The College Voice* are strictly those of student authors, and not of Connecticut College. All content and editorial decisions remain in the hands of the students; neither the College's administration nor its faculty exercise control over the content."

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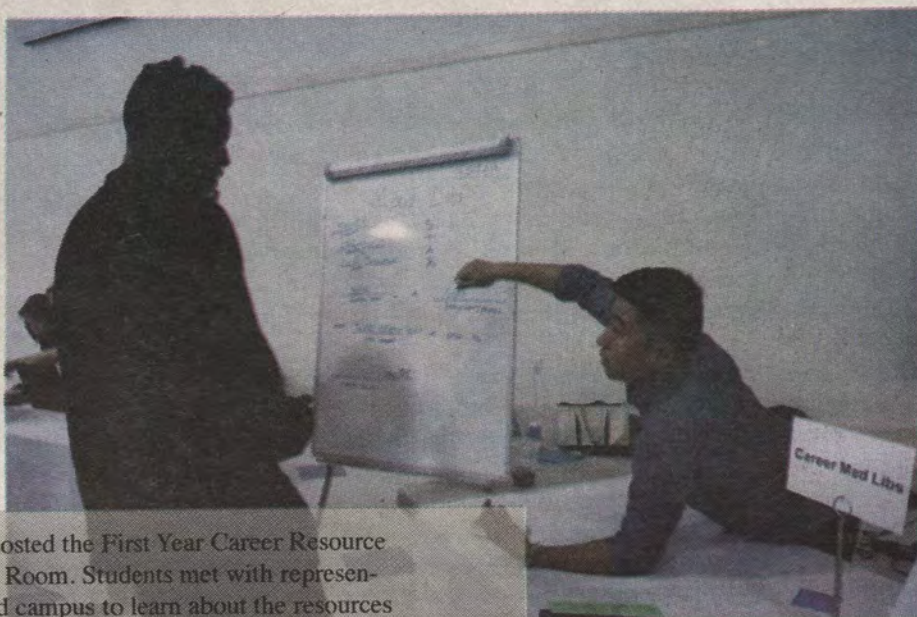
THIS WEEK'S COPY EDITORS

Gwen Feldman

Thank you for reading

&

Thank you for writing



The First Year Seminar program hosted the First Year Career Resource Fair on Friday, Nov. 6 in the 1962 Room. Students met with representatives from various offices around campus to learn about the resources available to them as they begin their journey at Connecticut College.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF
OLGA NIKOLAEVA

Veterans Day

Nov. 11, 2015

Please join the Connecticut College community to honor those who have served our country.

8 a.m. — Flag Raising Ceremony — at the Flag Pole, College Main Entrance

Noon — "Come into the Quiet," a meditation led by The Rev. Carolyn Patierno, Harkness Chapel

3 p.m. — "Reception to Honor Veterans." Join the College community to honor staff, faculty and students who are veterans. Charles E. Shain Library Living Room.

4:30 p.m. — REF Program: "Do We Really 'Support the Troops?'" Exploring Veterans Issues on Veterans Day," with Professor Catherine Stock, floor governors Lindsey Nelson '17 and Steve Grinsztejn '18, Health Services Physician Ken Larsen, and Sam Santiago '17. Coffee Grounds, open to the campus community.



CONTINUED FROM FRONT

About 70% of registered Syrian refugees in Lebanon, for example, are living below the poverty line; these Syrians, who now make up a quarter of Lebanon's population, must compete with native inhabitants for jobs and health services.

On Sept. 20 the Obama administration unveiled plans that seek to ease the toll of mass migration in Europe. Agreeing to open US borders, Secretary of State John Kerry announced that the annual cap on refugees will be raised from 70,000 to 100,000 by 2017. This step, Secretary Kerry declared, "will be accompanied by additional financial contributions."

Colleges in the U.S. have followed suit by organizing their own relief efforts. At Wesleyan University, for example, President Michael Roth has called upon the community to deliver recommendations on "what we Wesleyans could do." Prior to the announcement, Wesleyan students Colfay Phillips '16 and Casey Smith '17 took matters into their own hands and formed a student-run Wesleyan Refugee Project (WRP). The WRP has worked to coordinate weekly volunteer efforts at the Integrated Refugees and Immigrant Services (IRIS) in New Haven, which helps refugees access social services. In mounting a three-part on-campus series of lectures, which will outline both the refugee experience and international responses to mass migration, Wesleyan hopes to present students with a more contextualized understanding of the crisis.

Earlier this year, at Conn, President Bergeron established a Syrian Refugee Task Force to explore the ways in which the College might aid migrants.

The four-member force includes Professor and Chair of the Government Department, Tristan Borer, visiting professor of economics Herman Lushgard, Mary Devins of CIS-LA, Kiesha Henry of PICA and junior Ramzi Kaiss. In the coming weeks, the Task Force will offer its recommendations to President Bergeron, who will decide which suggestions should be implemented. Once an agenda is finalized, a budget will be set-up to direct aid efforts.

Faculty members of the Task Force have backgrounds essential to creating a plan that reflects the values of Conn College. Kaiss emphasizes that with her knowledge of human rights, Professor Borer "understands the laws of the refugee system." Professor Lushgard, himself a Syrian native, intimately grasps the plight of refugees. Ms. Devins and Ms.

Ford, for their part, have experience connecting students to community outreach programs.

The Task Force meets on a weekly basis during which members share research on how to forge ideas and connect with different organizations. The Task Force has already attended a talk sponsored by IRIS to explore the role the Conn community can play.

Still in the initial stages of its formation, the Task Force is in the process of evaluating specific policy proposals, such as whether to aid migrants at home or abroad. Kaiss indicated that the Force "hasn't decided yet because there are different needs for different communities. The people in Syria have different needs than those in refugee camps or who have already resettled." The work of resettlement agencies in the US, for instance, is largely focused on helping refugees navigate the transition to a new country.

As a student, Kaiss emphasized that his role on the Task Force is as "a learner, trying to apply what [he] learns in this real life setting." For Kaiss and the rest of the Force, student input is essential. On Nov. 11, for example, a discussion will be held to generate feedback on how the College can best address the migrant crisis. The event will take place at 4:30 in Blaustein's Faculty Lounge and is open to the entire campus community.

President Bergeron felt that, as institutions of higher learning, colleges have a stake in mitigating the crisis. "Connecticut College," she said, "has a long standing history of social justice and responsiveness to issues of global concern. We are trying to look at the crisis from an institutional perspective. I have just touched base with Professor Borer, and we're discussing the near medium and long-term goals of the Task Force. We're hoping to have some proposals ready by the semester's end."

Professor Borer believes that grassroots efforts on college campuses to ameliorate the migrant crisis strengthen democratic institutions. Colleges may have the potential to aid refugees, but their efforts cannot address the root issues propelling mass migration. "To end the crisis," Professor Borer said, "superpowers must bring their resources to bear. In our democracy, we believe that the government is responsible to the people. By forming a task force, we are putting pressure on elected officials to bring about long-term change." •

Alumna Shares Insights During Common Hour Talk on Civil Rights Movement

SHATRUNJAY MALL
STAFF WRITER

On Wednesday, Oct. 28, Conn students got a glimpse into the history of activism at the College when alumna Karin Kunstler Goldman '65 talked

about her experiences as a student activist in the 1960s during the height of the Civil Rights era. She spoke to a group of students who had gathered at Ernst Common Room in the Blaustein Humanities Center during the common hour between 11:50 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. The event was co-sponsored by the Office of the Dean of the College, the Dean of Institutional Equity and Inclusion and CCSRE.

Dean of the College Jefferson Singer introduced the speaker. In his introductory remarks, Dean Singer applauded Goldman's contributions to activism during her time as a student at the College and her subsequent accomplishments during her illustrious career as a lawyer. He specifically noted Goldman's involvement in organizing the first ever intercollegiate civil rights conference at the College. The event featured such luminaries of the Civil Rights era as Bayard Rustin and Goldman's own father William Kunstler, a lawyer at the forefront of the Civil Rights movement. Dean Singer also referred to discussions he has had with Interim Dean of Institutional Equity and Inclusion David Canton about the need to more effectively utilize the common hour period by organizing more events for students.

Goldman began her talk by describing the general atmosphere of Conn during her years as a student. In the early 1960s, the College was still exclusively for women. Many of the students were largely apolitical. They were "more interested in taking part in pageants," an activity encouraged by their families and visiting their boyfriends who studied at Yale, Wesleyan and elsewhere. Effectively, "the College would empty out over the weekends." A minority of students and professors, however, were more vocal on political matters such as the Civil Rights movement. She especially noted the role of Professor Emeritus of Mathematics Ernest Schlesinger, whose widow, Gabriella Schlesinger, was in attendance.

During her time as a student, Goldman got the opportunity to study away for a semester at Tougaloo College, a historically African-American college in Jackson, Mississippi. She was one of only four white students. Perhaps influenced by the prejudices of his time, former President of the College Charles E. Shain (1962-1974) asked Kunstler to either withdraw from Conn and re-apply after studying at Tougaloo or not go at all. In the end, however, she prevailed over President Shain, "who acknowledged his mistake" of threatening her return.

It was especially fascinating to hear Goldman describe her experiences as a Northern white woman studying in the segregated South. She often found herself to be the only white woman in a group of black students, and she witnessed firsthand how these students faced systemic discrimination in such simple daily activities as visiting the shoe store.

Goldman was also a part of the Mississippi Freedom Summer of 1964, when many volunteers went to Mississippi to help African Americans register to vote and bring national attention to the brutality of segregation in the Deep South. On Oct. 27, the day prior to the talk, Goldman made an appearance at a New London Hall screening of a documentary entitled *Freedom Summer*.

Throughout her talk, Goldman made a few references to the film. A major event of the *Freedom Summer* was the murders of Andrew Goodman, James Chaney and Michael Schwerner by Klansmen. Goldman noted that, as white men, the murders of Goodman and Schwerner attracted nationwide notoriety. Although several African Americans had been killed previously, the public was outraged by the murders. The search for the bodies of Goodman and Schwerner was so extensive that surveyors discovered the remains of several unidentified black victims.

After returning to Conn, Goldman was nominated by President Shain to attend a conference for students from across the United States at the White House. At the conference, she had the opportunity to meet and talk to the daughters of former U.S. President Lyndon B. Johnson. As a result of several such instances of direct engagement with the White House on the part of student activists and others, the Voting Rights Act of 1965 was signed into law.

Accompanying Goldman to the talk was her husband, Neal Goldman, who attended Yale Law School, and is an attorney. He built upon some of his wife's remarks by discussing his own observations of the Civil Rights era. In response to a question, he noted major differences in the way that the Civil Rights movement unfolded in various states. In Mississippi, for example, the Civil Rights movement was more spread out and led by student activists there, as compared to Alabama where many of the well-known figures of the Civil Rights movement operated at the forefront. He urged the students to register to vote and make their voices heard through the electoral system for the sake of the many victims of racially charged violence who had struggled to make the U.S. a nation where all people regardless of skin color are able to vote.

In response to another question about the differences between activism in her time and contemporary times, Goldman said that she was especially impressed by 21st century activists in such movements as Occupy Wall Street and Black Lives Matter. Leaders of these movements, she said, have done a much better job laying the groundwork for change through education initiatives than did their Civil Rights predecessors. By contrast, she noted, "Our activism was more visceral." She also commented that contemporary activists benefited from a proliferation of technology, available to aid their efforts.

The film screening and the talk were brilliant opportunities for current students at the College to learn from a direct source about events they may have read or learned about indirectly. The events were occasions to learn about the history of Conn and the U.S. more generally and to recognize how times have evolved. They could more deeply appreciate the efforts of the hundreds of people who worked for change all those decades ago. Further, the insights that the students received from Goldman can potentially help them in their current and future efforts to fight against social injustices in contemporary times. •

To Bring Criminal Justice Reform, Obama calls to “Ban the Box”

SAM WILCOX
NEWS EDITOR

President Barack Obama recently called for federal agencies to “ban the box,” which means eliminating the checkbox that asks about a job applicant’s criminal

history. This movement, however, is not a recent development. The first calls for banning the box began in Hawaii during the 1990s, and eventually the movement grew to the mainland United States.

The number of Americans with criminal histories has grown exponentially in the past several decades. This is largely due to the harsh penalties for drug crimes that were implemented during the “War on Drugs” in the 1980s and ‘90s. Today, as a result, many job-seekers are forced to check off the box asking about previous arrests, even if their crime was non-violent. Furthermore, racial disparities in the criminal justice system mean that people of color are disproportionately affected by these types of policies.

The Ban the Box campaign was officially started by All of Us or None, a grassroots civil rights organization established in 2003 by formerly incarcerated people and their families. According to the group’s website, their goals are to fully restore the civil and human rights of men and women after their release from prison or jail, eliminate all forms of discrimination based on arrest or conviction records and to advocate for the human rights of people in prison. These broad goals encompass many different components of comprehensive criminal justice reform; eliminating the box from job applications is one small step in the bigger movement towards a more just society.

On Nov. 2, President Obama spoke at Rutgers University in Newark, New Jersey, commending programs that seek to ease the re-entry of formerly incarcerated individuals into society. Yet many of the barriers faced by these individuals are still in place. On the issue of banning the box, Obama had this to say: “It is relevant to find out whether somebody has a criminal record. We’re not suggesting ignore it. What we are suggesting is that when it comes to the application, give folks a chance to get through the door. Give them a chance to get in there so they can make their case.”

President Obama used the story of Dquan Rosario to illustrate the importance of giving second chances. Rosario served a prison sentence for a drug crime, was released from prison at the age of 37 and now works as an emergency medical technician in Newark. Rosario’s accomplishments should be within reach of all formerly incarcerated people. However, with the checkbox still on job applications, many fail to secure employment. Unemployment causes numerous problems for those on parole or probation, as the terms

of their release normally require that they are employed. If they fail to find employment, they are often sent back to prison. Those who are not sent back to prison, yet still fail to secure legitimate employment, are much more likely to return to the behavior and activities that landed them in prison in the first place.

Many civil rights groups applauded President Obama’s speech, yet others were disappointed that he did not use his power to deliver an executive order that would ban the box for good. This would not have been uncharacteristic of the President, as during his time in office, President Obama has issued 15 executive orders. Some of these have required that companies that do business with the government to raise their minimum wage, adopt non-discrimination policies and provide workers with paid time off. Although he did not deliver an executive order “banning the box”, 19 states, including Connecticut have already “banned the box”. Seven states, including Rhode Island, have removed the conviction history question on applications not only for public companies, but also for private employers.

Several major companies are known for their willingness to hire applicants with criminal histories. These companies range from restaurants like Chipotle or Applebee’s, to retail stores like Kohl’s, to large scale corporations like PepsiCo. and Apple Inc. In 2013, Target removed questions about criminal history from their job applications, a step that more companies are likely to follow in light of growing support to “ban the box.”

The Ban the Box campaign also affects those seeking higher education. In Oct. 2014, three New York colleges ended their practice of asking applicants if they had ever been convicted of a felony. This resulted from an editorial published in *The New York Times* that called for colleges to remove the question from their admissions process. The article was particularly intent on drawing attention to the typically juvenile nature of the transgressions committed by college applicants. While the box affects formerly incarcerated individuals convicted for a multitude of felonies, the policy trickled down to harm young people who had been arrested for crimes such as underage drinking, an activity many students engage in, but are not necessarily caught doing.

Even with a nationwide ban of the box, other issues exist that prevent a formerly incarcerated individual from fully reintegrating into society. These include but are not limited to: disenfranchisement, housing bans and difficulties gaining government assistance in the form of welfare or food stamps. •

Strategic Planning Committee Envisions College’s Future

SARAH ROSE GRUSZECKI
OPINIONS EDITOR

“The past year has been one of significant transformation and change,” President Bergeron stated in her email this past September, announcing the formation

of the Strategic Planning Committee. Designed to envision and develop the goals and objectives of our institution for the next decade, the President met with representatives from the Student Government Association, the Staff Council and the Faculty Steering and Conference Committee in order to form an inclusive and representative team to develop a foundation for the future of the College.

The current committee consists of four staff members, four faculty members, four students and four members of senior management. This re-envisionment of the College arrives at an optimal time as faculty, administration and students begin to explore the new CONNections core curriculum program, to replace the current general education model. As described by the Strategic Planning Website, “The adoption of a new curriculum marks an important milestone in our history. The goals and values expressed in that curriculum — connecting intellectual discovery, global engagement, equity, inclusion, and student success — offer a unique opportunity to reposition the College and assert its value in the current higher education landscape.”

John Nugent, Director of Institutional Research and Planning, is assisting the committee. He is accompanied by staff from Keeling & Associates (K&A), a higher education consulting firm based in New York City. The firm is supporting the College in collecting data, conducting forums and interviews and distributing surveys in order to best analyze the emerging needs of the Connecticut College community. Over the past few weeks, the consulting group have facilitated several student “town hall” meetings and generated student feedback through “idea boards” strategically placed in the Connecticut College library. The firm currently holds an impressive clientele; over the past 30 years, they have served over 100 schools, including Colby, Wesleyan, Williams and several other NES-CAC colleges.

In order to obtain student representation for the board, the College distributed an email to all members of the student body seeking nominations and self-nominations to partic-

ipate in the committee. The elected student representatives, Grace Juster ’16, Gil Mejia ’17, Jake Versano ’18 and Roxanne Low ’19 all play a critical role in representing the needs and experiences of the student body. “This committee has provided a space for me to think about the processes involved in producing fundamental decisions and actions that guide what Connecticut College is, who it serves, what it does and why it does it. I want to encourage my peers to really think deeply about this. With that in mind, I have been working to provide spaces where students can reflect on the ways the college has supported them -- or has failed to do so,” Mejia describes.

Although these student committee leaders play a key role in the strategic planning process, Roxanne Low ’19 similarly emphasized the importance of wider student engagement, “As a single individual, it is difficult for me to present our perspective, but as a collective cohort, we can place our main interests on the round table discussion. [Student involvement] in this strategic planning process is very much needed in order to make it a successful one.”

Throughout the committee process, the importance of transparency has been similarly emphasized. As the Strategic Planning Committee website states, “The process will be conducted in a transparent and inclusive manner at every stage; balance community-wide input with the vision of the College’s leadership; work within and through established structures and cultures of shared governance; and integrate aspirations and creative designs for the future with the practical fundamentals of educational, pedagogical, administrative, and fiscal feasibility.”

Over the past year, it has become increasingly clear that the students of our community are committed to contributing to the strength and development of Connecticut College. However, in order to support and advocate for the community, students must be well-informed about the priorities of our institution. Through transparency, student engagement and a representative leadership team, the Strategic Planning Committee hopes to develop goals to help Connecticut College prosper as an inclusive and distinctive institution of higher education. •

Friday Morning Flop

HANNAH PEPIN
STAFF WRITER

As all first-year students know, the week of orientation we had before the semester started has not ended completely. Most upperclassmen are confused by the

concept of an extended orientation because they were not subject to extra time spent learning about the Honor Code or discussing their LASSI surveys. The kicker is that these additional sessions take place at 9 a.m. on Friday mornings.

While no first-year, or any student for that matter, is eager to wake up on a Friday morning and go to class, the Connecticut College faculty worked hard to establish what is called a new "team advising model." According to the Dean of the College, Jefferson Singer, the entire faculty agreed to enact Friday morning sessions for first-years. He explained, "the sessions were created to allow for opportunities to bring seminars together at a common time."

According to the legislation passed by the faculty, the refined first-year seminars aim to create an entire advising team to facilitate communication and open students to a broad support network. This new advising strategy works to better provide students with opportunities for social engagement.

Dean Singer also believes that, "the Friday sessions have great potential to have a positive and productive impact." He also explained that a committee is being formed specifically to "improve the integration of the different components of the first year seminar." In this way, the entire Connecticut College faculty hopes that any kinks in the system can be worked out this year. The committee will work to improve the new first-year seminar advising, so student reflections and feedback are a great way to figure out what needs to be changed.

It is true that the Friday 9 a.m. sessions will continue in the coming year, but Dean Singer says, "The format of the first-year seminar and how it blends the different workshops and skills sessions are likely to change." Some examples of what first years have worked on this year are an introduction to CELS, a more in-depth discussion about the Honor Code and a presentation with CC Curtis and Darcie Folsom about alcohol and drug misuse.

The sessions continue, but there is some discrepancy as to which seminars actually have to go to the activities. Some weeks, seminars meet in clusters of four classes each; in these cases, most everyone is required to attend. On paper, every student is mandated to attend all sessions; however, each seminar's participation is up to the professor's discretion.

My own seminar had nothing specifically planned one Friday morning, and our cluster decided to go for a hike in the Arboretum. Our objective was to discuss the ways in which our topics relate to one another and the world as a whole. It was a lovely way to start the day, but we missed examining globalization with other students.

Dean Singer explained that these sessions take place on Friday mornings at 9 a.m. because that time least impacted overall course scheduling. The fewest existing classes meet at this time, and he explained that in order for first-years to attend, no other 100-level courses could be scheduled at the same time. Taking into consideration the logistics of scheduling, this makes sense. But some first years, however, still do not like to wake up early on a Friday morning to go to a seminar, lecture or activity.

Many first-years have differing opinions, and some see Friday meetings in a positive light. One first-year, Aidan Clark, said, "The way I see it, it's better than having a really busy orientation week. Orientation week was fun and allowed me to meet people." He realizes the busyness made orientation better. He also explained that he has Friday morning class either way, so he does not mind waking up.

Another first-year, Liza Miller, commented on the Friday sessions: "A lot of them cover important issues, but I think they would be a lot more productive if they weren't every Friday." Students have come up with various ideas, like bimonthly Friday sessions or optional lectures during the weekend.

Whether first-years have to wake up on Friday mornings for class, a lecture or a hike in the Arboretum, the first-year seminar sessions were made to have a positive impact on incoming students. My initial perspective on these meetings was skeptical; I found an extension of orientation unnecessary. Some mornings, it is hard to focus on the sessions, and honestly, many students just don't show up. Professors need to be on the same page and either make the meetings mandatory or not. When I have to wake up on a Friday morning and go to a first-year seminar class and some of my friends can sleep through it, it's easy to be frustrated.

The faculty who voted through the first-year seminar sessions on Fridays had the best interests of the students in mind. Even though some of us very grudgingly drag ourselves out of bed in the morning, we need to grin and bear it for the remainder of the semester. •

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Continuing the New London Conversation

A First Year's Understanding

SAADYA CHEVAN
STAFF WRITER

As Conn students, we often find ourselves so deeply engrossed within the bubble of the College that it can be difficult to break free from that world, even if only for a few hours. Despite the fact that we have the city of New London just down the hill from us, many of us do not take much time to really get to know the city. As a first-year student here, I often find myself staying on campus during the weekend. When deciding not to go into the city, I usually tell myself that going into New London is too difficult or time-consuming, and I'm not sure what I would do there.

Discussing this issue with some of my friends, I found that they too felt that they did not have enough time to get out into the city. Some of them also felt a little intimidated by New London. I think that many first years do not venture off campus for similar reasons.

One reason for this problem is that our campus is somewhat isolated from the rest of the city. This means that it is very easy for us to remain ignorant of what goes on at the bottom of the hill, according to Chloe Jones '15, an Americorps VISTA volunteer in the Office of Volunteers for Community Service, who has been volunteering through OVCS since she was a first year here. Chloe has "always loved New London," and she acknowledges that part of the reason for this is because she was able to get out into the community in her first semester through OVCS.

Reflecting on the experience of the majority of Conn students, she observes that many of the Conn students who do not volunteer or work through OVCS are not really engaged with New London. She says, "They haven't had that experience [of engaging]; it's the first time they've been away from their home, so it's engaging in a community outside of where they grew up. I think a lot of people have misconceptions about New London, I've heard people say things like 'it's not safe.'" Ultimately, many of us, especially first-years,

are not in a position to claim that we know what New London is like because we do not spend enough time really getting to know the city.

When we look at the What's Happening! e-mails sent out every Wednesday by the Office of Student Engagement, it is clear that the office attempts to make us aware of some of the events that occur in New London. This effort, however, is weak.

The bottom of every e-mail contains a This Weekend in New London section that mentions some of the events scheduled in New London. However, this section is easy to overlook because the e-mail looks like it ends with the Sunday On-Campus Events.

Another problem is that the e-mail lists only a sampling of events, and suggests going to another website if a student wants to know everything that's going on in New London. This makes it look like there are fewer things going on in New London than on campus. Personally, I feel that events going on in New London should be listed alongside events on campus. While it is important for students to be involved in campus life, it is also important for us to be a part of the community that hosts us.

Ultimately, we as Conn students should see it as our responsibility to play a greater role in the New London community. Volunteering through OVCS, catching a show at the Garde and wandering through the shops and restaurants downtown are just some of the ways in which students can engage with New London.

Let's face it: this is your home for four years, and it would be nice to know more about New London than the fact that it houses Connecticut College. •

One Student's Ties and Deeper Perspectives

ISABELLE COOKSON
STAFF WRITER

As recognized among the Connecticut College community, there is a divide between the campus and the city in which the college is nestled. Students may compare the campus' stone architecture to the vinyl siding on the houses on the streets into New London. Frequently, Connecticut College students only think of their immediate surroundings when concluding 'what New London is.' This blind perspective is hurtful to the people one is characterizing.

In an article I wrote for the last issue of the *Voice*, I discussed the relationship between Connecticut College and New London. Kristen Jackson* grew up in New London and identifies with both communities. After reading my initial article, she reached out to the *Voice* to rectify my impression. We met, and she helped me explore New London from her perspective.

"While comparing the architecture of Conn and New London, you only looked at housing on one street," she pointed out. "New London has beautiful architecture too." In a city with immense history, having been founded in 1646, this makes sense. She took me on a driving tour of the city.

First we explored the historic areas of New London. We traveled down Starr Street, originally built between 1835 and 1840. It was a middle class neighborhood for "ministers, merchants, artists and ship riggers." Many functioned as boarding houses. Eventually, the street fell to disrepair. In an effort to save the city's history, the Savings Bank of New London bought the properties. With the help of the newly established Starr Street Association, the street was renovated to meet modern building codes. It became the first New London Historic District. Now, children from public schools visit the row of houses on field trips to learn about their city's history.

The second marvelous architectural time capsule that we drove by was Whale Oil Row. There are four mansions painted white with Greek columns. They were built between 1835 and 1845 with whaling money. As New London used to be a port city developed around the needs and consequences of whaling ships, there were profitable businesses, which led to naming mansions after the industry. They have been proudly kept up and are now used as law offices.

Next we drove through the downtown area – the triangle area between Bank Street, Huntington Street and State Street. There are restaurants, shops and public buildings. The library and courthouse in particular are gorgeous structures with red and grey stonework. We drove past multiple churches and modern murals, evidencing a lively arts and culture

scene.

Next, Jackson brought me to different areas of town, to display different ways of living. We drove down the street with the most expensive real estate and then past the high-rise tenant housing. We drove through middle class homes and duplex apartments. Despite the stereotypes, "these places are New London, too," she said.

Frequently, the atmosphere on the Connecticut College campus is one of superiority. Driving around New London with somebody who has personal experiences in each place we drove by made the city seem closer. "New London is similar to Connecticut College," she said. "There are all types of people in both places." When asked about how students should interact with the city, she said, students should interact with New London "as much as makes sense."

I wanted to develop this idea of 'how frequently makes sense,' so I went and talked with Kiesha Henry. She works in the Holleran Center and OVCS (Office of Volunteers for Community Service). Both offices connect students to New London through teaching learning experiences. Most people resent when outsiders say they can help. By changing the title from volunteering to "teaching learning experiences," two-way dialogs and productive interactions are encouraged. Both parties learn something. By having intentional interactions, though working with one of the school's forty partners or eating in a local restaurant, positive experiences are being formed. This, too, adds to the culture of the city. Despite the low average income of the New London population, "it is not a poor city." New London is rich in diversity, as evidenced by its food, culture and history. "When one engages with the New London community," Henry says, "they should be consistent, be intentional, and love it!"

**Editor's note: name has been changed to respect the desire of the student to remain anonymous. •*

A Look at Financial Aid After the Hale Donation

ANDREW SHAW
ARTS EDITOR

On Tuesday, Sept. 8, President Bergeron announced the largest gift in Connecticut College's history: \$20 million from Robert Hale '88, a trustee of the College, and his wife, Karen. "The gift will be fulfilled over a period of 10 years," Cameron Jones, Director of Major Gifts, explained in an e-mail. The exact size of each installment is currently under discussion. \$10 million will go towards financial aid. Of that, \$9 million will establish a Hale Scholars Program, the specifics of which have not yet been determined. The remaining \$1 million will be placed in the Connecticut College Fund. (The Connecticut College Fund includes the total amount of money received in annual gifts during the fiscal year, which begins July 1 and ends June 30.)

To learn more about how this particular chunk of the gift will be used and what it might accomplish, I sat down with Sean Martin, Director of Financial Aid Services, who explained Connecticut College's existing financial aid policy. "We have only need-based aid. ... We look at a family's income, assets and determine their ability to pay. ... If we cost sixty thousand dollars and we think you can pay ten, we subtract your ten from the sixty and that means you have fifty thousand dollars worth of need. We meet 100% of [each student's] need." He compared Conn's policy "to other institutions that don't meet full need." They might "give you twenty thousand dollars. That means your contribution is ten plus" whatever amount "they're not giving you." He said that Conn has "[met] full need ... for many years" and is "committed to doing so for many years to come."

This policy of meeting full need, of course, depends on how Financial Aid Services calculates need. I asked Martin, who worked at Wesleyan before coming here to Conn, how our financial aid compares to our peers, NESCAC and otherwise. He said, "That's a little bit of a loaded question in that we meet full need." What "full need" means depends on "our definition of need," which a prospective student would then compare to other schools' definitions. A student's package depends on how "we choose to meet that need:" whether more through grants or more through loans and work-study. Martin determines need by viewing each "file and student and family individually" to find "the story behind the numbers, not just the numbers," he said. "We look at components of things like home equity or contribution from income or assets for [individuals] perhaps a bit differently from our peers in ways that I believe are fairly generous," he said. He declined to list "things that we do so much better than our peers," because, he said, "[it is] not that simple. It's not as simple as 'Oh, well, we look at X completely differently than everybody else.'"

Regardless, what the financial aid office can and does consider "need" is necessarily limited by the school's financial situation. "We don't have the luxury and the resources to be everything that I think we would all hope we could be. But that being said, I think we're very much in line with our peers and, in some ways that are not insignificant, I think we're much more generous than they are. There are some areas that perhaps we're not, but that's the trade-off in ... maintaining a financial aid budget within reason," Martin said.

That budget has grown over the last several years as the demand for financial aid has increased. In fiscal year 2004, it was around 17% of the College's total expenditure (\$13.8 million of \$80.1 million). By fiscal year 2015, it had risen to about 24% (\$30.9 million out of \$128.3 million). Through what Martin called "asset reallocation," the Hales' \$10 million "eases the pressure on the financial aid budget." The gift will "help supplement and ... strengthen our ability to ... [continue meeting full need] as an institution" despite an increasing demand for financial aid. There are currently no stipulations governing continued receipt of the \$10 million. As such, the financial aid office is able to continue doing what it does, but with what is in effect a larger budget.

I wondered whether the gift, as a "budget-relieving mechanism," would change who gets access to a Conn education, whether it would increase, for example, socioeconomic or geographic diversity. Reiterating Conn's "commitment" to need-based aid, Martin said, "To a degree, I think we're always looking to refine our needs analysis to be as generous as we can as an institution. Something like this gift only helps us to continue to do that." Nonetheless, having received a large gift like this, we must evaluate the sustainability of Conn's financial aid practices, as he said. Mr. Martin attests to the College's current goals of increasing types of diversity, full participation, and inclusive excellence by providing "economic access by meeting a family's full need." Despite the steep price tag, Martin hopes that "[the financial aid office's] interactions with students and families can help to provide greater access." He emphasized that the office is "committed to the diversity that we've ... achieved through this need-based aid that we currently have: socioeconomically, racially, ethnically, across the board." Despite the inevitable budgetary limits, he said, "having an institutional commitment to meeting full need ... helps in achieving some of those diversity goals. [It is] one less obstacle for a family that views an institution that costs as much as we do as an obstacle."

Clearly, the Hales' gift will at least indirectly increase prospective and admitted students' potential access to Conn, and will ease the burden of our 52% of matriculated students who currently receive financial aid. Given the current lack of stipulations on how the money should be used, I hope that Financial Aid Services staff will actively use this gift, and the office's resulting increased robustness, to reassess how they calculate need. Meeting full need is essential to creating a more economically and socially diverse student body. This would improve the experience of even those students who do not receive aid. If, instead, privileged people conventionally defined (white, wealthy, and able, with college-educated parents, among other characteristics) are the only people who make it onto this campus as students to begin with, we all suffer. (The question of who arrives on campus as staff and faculty is beyond the scope of this article; each deserves at least an article to itself.) Given that all of these decisions ultimately depend on how much money Conn has, I am keen to see if and how the Hales' donation to financial aid changes the campus climate. •

College Joins Coalition, Aims to Reform Admissions Process

KAYLA KIBBE
CONTRIBUTOR

Late last month, Connecticut College announced their partnership with the newly launched Coalition for Access, Affordability, and Success. Essentially a kind of reform of the college application process, the Coalition plans to introduce a number of new tools intended to simultaneously broaden and simplify the college application process, making it more accessible to a wider range of applicants.

While the Coalition asserts their goal is to improve the college application process for all students, there is considerable emphasis on making the process more accessible to students of historically underrepresented backgrounds, particularly those representing lower income households. As a member of the Coalition, Connecticut College joins over eighty institutions of higher education, both private and public, all meeting the Coalition's definition of "affordable." For public institutions, the Coalition defines affordability based on low in-state tuition in combination with need-based financial aid. Meanwhile, the private schools within the Coalition mirror Conn in a commitment to meeting to the full demonstrated financial need of every admitted student.

Starting this January, the Coalition will begin introducing a platform of application tools that will be available to students as early as their freshman year of high school. In making their tools available early on, the Coalition hopes to instill early college-minded thinking in all students, particularly those who may not see college as an option. Currently, the Coalition's plans for a three-part platform which will include a student portfolio coined the "College Locker," a collaboration platform which students can use to invite counselors, teachers and other academic advisors to aid their admissions process, as well as an application component.

While the Coalition obviously aims to improve the application process for prospective students, the new platform provides benefits on the admissions side of the process as well, particularly with regard to the Coalition's release of the application portal. Currently, this aspect of the platform is intended to enable members of the Coalition to create a customized application. This updated form of application may enable colleges to get a better idea of an applicant as an individual, as well as how that individual will function in that specific college community. Along with improving and broadening accessibility for students, the Coalition may also help to provide a better fit between students and schools than the more generalized Common App.

While the very name of the reform itself promises only the best of intentions, the Coalition for Access, Affordability, and Success has met with a surprising amount of controversy. As a member of the Coalition, Connecticut College joins a number of other

prestigious institutions, including all eight Ivy League schools as well as many of our fellow NESCAC schools. While the Coalition claims that this prestigious team aims to encourage the idea that even the most esteemed institutions are a possibility to qualified students – regardless of socioeconomic status – its opponents remain unconvinced.

In a recent article for the Washington Post, Jon Boeckenstedt, Associate Vice President of Enrollment Management and Marketing at DePaul University, went as far as labeling the Coalition's purported goals as nothing more than an "attractive wrapper" under which prestigious universities are attempting to conceal a continued preference for wealthy applicants. Later in the article, Boeckenstedt continues to accuse the Coalition of ulterior motives, reducing its more esteemed members to "a group of America's most high-profile private colleges, already obsessed with prestige, attempting to grab more."

Contrary to Boeckenstedt's bold allegations, Connecticut College does not appear to be using the Coalition as a veil to conceal socioeconomic greed, but rather as a tool to further promote the College's academic and otherwise merit-based prestige. Andrew Strickler, Dean of Admission and Financial Aid, echoes this sentiment of academic "greed" over social prestige with the slightly tongue-in-cheek assertion, "I'm a selfish jerk. I want 1,900 of the best kids possible at Connecticut College. Not the wealthiest, not the poorest. Simply the best."

Unfortunately for the Coalition's adversaries, Conn's partnership doesn't appear to be based on anything more underhanded than a desire for all qualified applicants from any and all backgrounds to have the opportunity to receive a Connecticut College education. Essentially, as Strickler clarified in a less provocative statement, "Our decision to join the Coalition is primarily based on creating more options and increasing opportunity for students of underrepresented backgrounds."

For the time being, it would appear that Conn is living up to the Coalition's outward portrayal of integrity. However, although both Conn and the Coalition have presented attractive and credible exteriors, the controversy surrounding this new organization and the many prestigious institutions it has partnered with remains active. While it is certainly easy to take the Coalition at its idealistic face value, the surrounding controversy makes it difficult to turn a blind eye to suggestions of underlying motivations. Either way, the Coalition has surrounded itself with an impressive team. The question remains, however, of whether that team is one of prestigious institutions using their prominence to encourage a new era of economic equality in the world of elite universities, or merely one of fast talkers. •

Racist Caricature in Student Journalism

SUNY Plattsburg Student Newspaper Under Fire

DANA GALLAGHER
HEAD COPY EDITOR

On Oct. 23, SUNY Plattsburgh's student-run newspaper, *The Cardinal Points*, reached the national spotlight following its publication of a racially charged

cartoon. The cartoon, which accompanied an article that touted the University's strong minority presence, featured an African-American graduate in a decrepit neighborhood. The graduate appears undisturbed by the crooked stop signs, graffiti-scarred houses and broken-down cars surrounding him. With his bulging eyes and exaggerated mouth, he emerges as the modern caricature of African-Americans in a Jim Crow South.

SUNY Plattsburgh, one of 64 state universities in New York, has experienced a number of racial flashpoints. Last year, the paper published an article describing how the racist milieu of Plattsburgh carries over into campus life. Plattsburgh is home to New York's sole KKK chapter, and some students seem to embrace the Klan's rhetoric. The school was also rocked by the discovery last year that "Black kids suck" was written on a bathroom stall. The illustrator of the cartoon under fire previously publicized his racist attitude on social media. He recently deleted an Instagram post captioned: "[His] favorite person in Plattsburgh" followed by the n-word as a hash-tag.

The response of both staff of *The Cardinal Points* and SUNY Plattsburgh's administration has been tempered. Jonathan Slater, chair of Plattsburgh's Department of Journalism and Public Relations, attributes the publication of the offensive cartoon to a "procedural failure on the part of the students." The editorial team, issuing an apology on Oct. 30, echoed Slater's sentiment. It emphasized, "As SUNY Plattsburgh students...we are constantly trying to represent the campus community in the best possible way, and in this case, we did not do so."

As an independently owned and operated paper, *The Cardinal Points* undergoes content review each Monday before distribution. During these sessions, the editorial team works with a staff advisor to debrief on the previous issue. Neither the advisor, nor the editorial staff, responded to emails by *The Voice* for an interview to discuss this process.

John Ellington, President of SUNY Plattsburgh, introduced several initiatives on Oct. 29 to address the campus-wide fervor. Writing to the campus community that "the front page illustration in Friday's edition of *Cardinal Points* does not reflect a range of values SUNY Plattsburgh holds dear," Ellington maintained that the University will hire a diversity officer, host a Diversity Week and create a student-led Multicultural Alliance in

the coming years. For the interim, the SUNY Plattsburgh Black Student Union will hold town hall meetings for students to voice their concerns.

If the cartoon is anathema to the University's social scene, the campus community should be willing to engage in an open dialogue on the incident. Portraying the cartoon as an unfortunate publishing error or an isolated instance of stereotyping on campus, the school sweeps the issue of racism under the rug. *The Cardinal Points* editorial team, for its part, perpetuates barriers among races in refusing to communicate with news outlets. Mutual understanding cannot be achieved when parties remain on the defensive. Defense acts a mechanism for self-protection and, as result, hinders an empowered camp from striving toward progress.

The national backlash at SUNY Plattsburgh should not be analyzed in a vacuum; it is, in fact, representative of a society far from effectively navigating the waters of a plural society. Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, in her dissent of *Schuetz v. Coalition to Defend Affirmative Action*, wrote that African-Americans suffer from "the lingering effects of an overtly discriminatory past, the legacy of centuries of law-sanctioned inequality." The inability of SUNY Plattsburgh to establish a meaningful, campus-wide conversation reveals the lingering impact of the racial divide the classroom.

Julie A. Helling, an associate professor of law, diversity and justice at Fairhaven College, argues that the threat of being racially categorized undermines academic performance. Poor academic performance, in turn, seems to validate racial stereotypes. She notes, "students of color have to spend much of their energy on racism in one form or another, and white students have that same energy to spend on education." While Helling recognizes the vulnerability whites feel when typecast as racists in a classroom setting, she considers "what a lifetime as a student of color hearing these comments could do to the student's focus."

In his 1848 report to the Massachusetts State Board of Education, education reformer Horace Mann articulated that "education...beyond all other devices of human origin, is the great equalizer of the conditions of men." Mann's vision, however, cannot reach fruition if the classroom remains a gauge for existing inequalities. To create opportunities for more equitable college experiences, we must first accept the vulnerabilities that our history entails. •

Suze Clues

Editor's note: The College Voice is bringing back the classic advice column in a big way! Ask Suze, our in-house relationship and lifestyle guru, all the questions you've been mulling over. Send Suze your questions anonymously at www.sayat.me/CCCCollegeVoiceAdvice.

Dear Suze,

I'm trying not to drink this semester, but I feel as though it is hard to go out with my friends and stay sober. Should I not go out or should I find new people to hang out with?

Well, what's going to make you happiest? I am a HUGE fan of taking a night off and just spending some time in my room watching TV or reading but that can get kind of dull after a while. I am also a proponent of hanging out with different types of people as a way to mix up your friend group and to try something new on the weekends. If you are unhappy hanging out with your friends at the moment, try something else. This doesn't mean you can't hang out with them at other times during the week but, when it's a Thursday or Saturday night, you either do your own thing or reach out to another group. I believe that establishing a balance in your social scene is really important, and it keeps you from getting into a rut.

Dear Suze,

I'm a graduating senior. What should I do with my life?!

Literally no idea. I've been told that things fall into place. Follow your dreams I guess? My dream is to be Tina Fey. I'll let you know how that works out. •

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Puzzling out *The Clasp*

Sloane Crosley's '00 Debut Novel

KATIE COWHERD
STAFF WRITER

Sloane Crosley's '00 greatest talent is her unabashed realism. Her collection of essays, *I Was Told There'd Be Cake*, is so successful because every other sentence feels like it was taken out of the back of your head. *The Clasp* is Crosley's first novel, and she is, as always, brutally honest and undeniably hilarious.

A college campus is the only place on earth where her three narrators could have possibly come together, each one practically mirroring the other in some way. The book starts at a wedding of their old college friend from freshman year, describing their varied reactions to being forced to socialize with people they fell out of contact with five years ago. It was the kind of opening that made me look up at my roommate in alarm and think, "I could be her bridesmaid in the near future. She's going to make me wear pastels and heels."

Some characters were married to people they had met in college. Some were still close friends, some kept up a pretense of friendship with wedding invitations and some were the kinds of friends that all adults seem to have: the ones they never actually talk to but always stay over for a weekend on a biannual basis. It's downright frightening reading this book in a room with friends I made two months ago, wondering if maybe the girl whose bed I'm sitting on will be sleeping on my couch eventually despite the fact that she hasn't texted me since graduation. *The Clasp* paints a terrifying picture of adulthood, filled with unsatisfying jobs, loneliness and forced conversations with coworkers and old friends alike.

The plot surrounds a long-lost French necklace that makes an appearance in the short story "The Necklace" by Guy de Maupassant, sending the characters on a wild goose chase across the French countryside chasing after a myth - and each other. The necklace however, is more of an excuse, a backdrop to the drama of a reignited love triangle between the three narrators; Kezia, Nathaniel and Victor.

Victor, forever lost within himself, loses himself to the idea of the necklace, finding purpose in the finding of it. Nathaniel, who has always been too sure of himself, tries to lose himself in Paris when he gets roped into a rescue mission - chasing down Victor.

Kezia is the perpetual babysitter of the story, taking care of her boss, her boss's busi-

ness, trying to keep up with Nathaniel's disillusioned Hollywood life and trying to keep Victor's head above water as best she can through a long-distance relationship.

The nostalgia for the kind for the people they used to be, for the kinds of people they used to want to be, swallows the rest of the story. It's slow-paced and stuck -- half of the book is flashbacks to college parties, college problems, college relationships. Each narrator takes their turn being resigned, cynically reflective, witty, and painfully nostalgic, making the reader equal parts amused, slightly bored, melancholy, and terrified of looming adulthood.

I spent a lot of this book wondering when the plot would pick up, wondering why I was reading so many details about the problems of Kezia's workday that seemed to contribute nothing to the book's plot or feelings of nostalgia and longing. I wondered if there were really people out there that lived like Victor, were as stuck as Victor, and then spent a considerable amount of time trying to think of how to avoid becoming Victor, and the same can be said of Nathaniel. What could be done to avoid being doomed to such a shallow existence? I asked the same question Nathaniel did -- how could you escape it?

A lot of the book feels like a box filled with the pieces from five different puzzles and it wasn't until the very end that they all get sorted out, if not quite put together. The story wasn't always engaging, but it was interesting, confusing, and it felt important. Reading it was like sticking with a

show that loses itself mid-series, just because you're emotionally invested enough to keep watching. You have to see how the pieces come together. You have to see if, even after all that time, it's still possible for the pieces to fit together like they once did.

The Clasp is the kind of book that makes you ache hoping for a happy ending, and continues to make you ache when you realize that that's just not the way it works. Reading was slow, but the very last chapter pulled it together. I got it, but not until after it was all over, everything is perfectly clear in retrospect -- an idea I'm sure both Crosley and the narrators would agree with. *The Clasp*, after all, is nothing more or less than the story of three people chasing down something that's never too late to find. •

It was the kind of opening that made me look up at my roommate in alarm and think, "I could be her bridesmaid in the near future. She's going to make me wear pastels and heels."

More Than Just a Lecture from Kiese Laymon

HANNAH PEPIN
STAFF WRITER

Connecticut College prides itself on inviting engaging and intelligent speakers to discuss various important topics that impact not only student life here

at Conn, but also the world outside our stone buildings and dining halls. On Wednesday night, Oct. 28, students and faculty alike crowded into the Ernst Common Room to hear Kiese Laymon speak.

Laymon is a black Southern writer from Jackson, Mississippi. His works include the novel *Long Division* and the collection of essays *How to Slowly Kill Yourself and Others in America*. He is also working on a new novel that will be out in the Spring of 2017 and finishing a memoir that he will release in the Fall of 2016. Laymon graduated from Oberlin College and earned his MFA from Indiana University; he is now an Associate Professor of English and Africana Studies at Vassar College.

Numerous English and Africana Studies courses' syllabi at Conn teach either *Long Division* or his collection of essays because they are valuable additions to each of these subjects. Many of the professors of these courses, as well as their students were present at the lecture. People filled the room and even had to stand in the back as Professor Courtney Baker introduced him. He stepped up to the podium with a smile on his face and spoke warm words of thanks to the audience of eager listeners. This lecture was not at all typical because Laymon's confident, yet friendly demeanor allowed for conversation to flow easily during the question and answer session at the end.

Rather than simply discussing a topic, he began the lecture by reading a passage from his upcoming memoir. He is writing the memoir with his grandmother, whom he sees as his most important source of inspiration in his writing. Laymon spoke of very real, very emotional topics. As he plunged into the detailed account of the conversations he had with his grandmother about his childhood, his confidence and passion for literature were clear. He spoke of the trials his grandmother had to go through during her time gutting chickens on an assembly line as well as his own sexual abuse and violations as an adolescent.

Laymon spoke frequently about the way his grandmother impacted his life. He connected with the audience, using anecdotes about the way she dressed and was always "on fleek." He explained that she would never leave the house for church unless she was sure she would be the best dressed woman there. Laymon said he wants to "carry the same desire to be fresh and innovative in [his] literary work." Any student who has read any of

his work would notice that he spoke with the same realness and raw emotion that can be found in his writing. There was not one person in the audience whom he did not captivate with his honest reading.

After this intense reading, students were eager to ask him questions, which were almost always answered with a question to the student. He was genuinely interested in the lives of the students, and he explained that as an educator himself, he used to even get *too* caught up in the lives of his students. He wants his students, and all students, to succeed.

Laymon spoke about his methods as a writer, explaining that "most of what we write isn't good, but it's healthy." He gave examples that were easily relatable to school environments and our own writing. Laymon was incredibly humble about his work and did not try to act as the be-all and end-all of knowing how to write. He even said that it took him 60 pages to get one that he was satisfied with.

When the conversation turned toward more solemn questions about race relations in America, he was serious and honest. Laymon did not hold back his opinions and views about the ideas of shame and privilege. He explained, "I think privilege is just a fluffy way to talk about the shit. I think it's a privilege that I wrote with my grandmother."

His inspiration to write came from countless hours of reading African-American literature, by writers like Toni Morrison and Octavia Butler (whom he names characters after in *Long Division*), watching movies and listening to music. In speaking with him after the lecture, he also explained that the short essays in *How to Slowly Kill Yourself and Others in America* were inspired by his mother, grandmother, uncle and three of his friends. Laymon called this "community literature" and paying homage to the people of the community who made his work possible. His primary goal in writing is "for people to know the importance of honesty and community." Laymon believes communities need to talk honestly whether it be "hard, joyful, or painful" and listen in order to collectively act on things together.

What started out as a typical lecture by an author of African-American literature became an honest conversation with one of the most intelligent and sincere writers of our time. As Conn students, we may not have an extra hour or two to read "for fun," but investing a little bit of time into the work of Kiese Laymon is time well spent and will open us all up to think more deeply about ourselves and the society in which we live. •

Modern Dance: Performing Life

HALLIE CARMEN
STAFF WRITER

I've never
been one to
understand

Modern dance. Before coming to Conn, the only dance I was really exposed to was classical and modern ballet. Like many other Conn students, I discovered modern dance for the first time when I came to Conn. For many people, myself included, modern dance is hard to understand.

Why is she eating on stage? Why are they running in circles? What's with the falling and catching themselves? To this day, I don't completely understand why these specific elements are integrated into modern dances. However, the more I've attended dance shows on campus, the more I have realized that modern dance is much like real life.

Over Halloween weekend, Conn's Dance Club transformed Meyers Studio into their own stage, presenting the club's annual fall semester show. This year's show was titled "Backspace." According to the Dance Club Executive Board's program notes, the title of the show was inspired by the idea that dance professors often mention the term "backspace" to Dance students, "encouraging us to utilize the space."

Backspace's 12 original pieces were all choreographed by students. The choreographers included Sasha Peterson '16, Emma Smith '16, Eva Vargas '16, Cecilia Bole '18, Stephanie Reeves '16, Kelly Fairman '18, Maddy Dickey '18, Grace Finley '16, Sergio Madera '16, Julia Lesniak '17 and Emily Green '18.

All of the 12 pieces were unique in their own ways. Some pieces were upbeat and included more jumping and running, while others were lyrical and slower paced, including more stationary movements. Overall, many of the dances seemed to have deeper meanings than what was on the surface. The final piece of the show, "Murica," choreographed by Green, was a dance that is "an ode to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness," according to the program.

"Murica" began with most of the dancers in a small "v" formation in the back of the stage, in front of a backdrop of an animated American flag as "The Star-Spangled Banner" played in the background. At this point in the piece, the focus was on one of Green's dancers,



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HALLIE CARMEN

to our daily lives than anything. The running, falling and catching oneself and eating are all part of our lives somehow. However, modern dance seems to be much more polished, athletic, and graceful compared to our daily lives. It has the power to take a simple movement, such as walking or even waving to someone, and make it into something more. •

Emma Smith '16, who, like the dancers in the back, stood facing the backdrop with her right hand over her heart. As Smith stood in the front of the stage, she would eagerly turn to look down at an apple pie that was on the floor to the side of her every couple of seconds. Spoiler Alert: she ended up eating the pie.

As soon as the "The Star Spangled Banner" ended, the piece transitioned into a more upbeat, fast-paced celebration of American spirit, featuring Journey's "Any Way You Want It." When asked about how she came up with this idea of this patriotic piece, Green said, "For my first dance at Conn I just couldn't bring myself to make something serious or sad. My ideas for my piece started when I heard the song [Journey's "Any Way You Want It"] that I ended up using. It was upbeat and fun and the chorus of the song inspired the message I decided to channel into the dance." Green continued, saying that she saw "the song's chorus as reflecting the way I view our country's behavior on political issues in the past and the present - doing whatever we want to because we want to, regardless of right or wrong."

When asked about her choice to include the apple pie, Green replied, "The decision to add the pie (and the lovely dancer who ate the pie, Emma Smith) to the piece came about two weeks before the show. I wanted an extra non-serious element that still represented the over-arching ideas of the piece."

The next Dance Club show will be next semester. The Dance Club Executive Board, featuring co-presidents Maddy Dickey '18 and Grace Bradley '18 and treasurer Hanako Brais '18, expressed their excitement about next semester's show. "We're eager to welcome back the juniors who are currently abroad. In the past, the juniors always bring their newfound inspirations to Dance Club, which challenges and raises the standards of creativity and experimentation," they said.

So what should we make of modern and post-modern dance? Personally, the more I've attended this performance and countless others on campus, the more I've realized that Modern dance is more similar

The Arts and Academia: Art and the Itch

MITCH PARO
ARTS EDITOR

I sat down this week
with art major Anna
Grofik '16 and Gregory

Bailey, Associate Professor of Art and current Chair of the Art Department. The subject was their subject: Art. Studio art, more precisely, as it lives and breathes in this particular enclave of academia.

The art world, in academia and elsewhere, is saturated with dichotomies. One of which is the distinction habitually made between artists and non-artists, between those who create and those who witness. In this view, each of us falls into one or the other camp, based on whether or not we have something called talent.

This idea, however, comes from those who identify as non-artists, those to whom art is something that exists only as a finished product, a concert or an exhibition. Artists, then, are the ones with the talent, those who can dance or paint or sing. They give the show, we watch it. Aesthetic feeling is sublimated to a recognition of ability, a dazzle hardly different from the admiration one feels for a star baseball player or a polyglot.

The artists see it differently.

An artist, in Grofik's view, is not defined by one's works but by an inner compulsion to create. They spend countless hours in the sole company of this imperative and its attendant doubts and victories. The work we see on stage or in the gallery is a small portion--the best--of a perpetual series of brow-beating cogitations and revisions. This process brings one ever closer to a certain ideal, says Grofik, that is impossible to ever really reach. The cherished creative imperative is attended by "a feeling that your work will never be good enough, but you keep going anyway."

This is part of the reason why, when artists find them-

selves in interviews, they often feel themselves "being pushed into a box. They'll become absurd and try to evade it. Artists don't like boxes." The interviewer, in this hypothetical situation, insists that the work is done, and seeks to define the artist thereby. The artist, however, is keenly conscious of what could have been better, and what might still be to come.

An artist, moreover, would not be keen to see themselves as a mere box of talent, who every now and then sits down and expels it for the entertainment of a real or imagined audience. Artists too, need to train. But though a perfect game of baseball is possible, a perfect work of art is not. An artist needs to come to terms with this fact as they hone their technique and their vision.

"Any art major would tell you that they don't want to live the nine-to-five, cubicle life. And yet they choose to enclose themselves every night in the studio, where they stay for hours in a cubicle that is smaller and blanker than anything at an office." It may not be the most inspiring place, but Grofik's description of the studio highlights the dedication to craft that defines the artist. They choose this particular box out of the compulsion to be alone and create.

To contrast the necessary hours of isolation, however, the art department engenders a unique community. Grofik said that "it can be uncomfortable, and a little strange, but one of the best ways to get to know someone is to spend hours alone with them in the studio, making."

She said further that she is inspired by few places on campus. Attracted to the absurd and disturbing, she finds our campus "too clean...sterile" to give rise to the creative impulse.

Another specious feature of the artist/non-artist dichot-

omy is the idea that witnesses are themselves without artistic feeling. The ability to witness artistically is integral to the training of the art major.

Professor Bailey described to me the event of the critique that follows the completion of every project in a studio art class. "We talk as a group about each student's work," he said. "The student whose work we're critiquing doesn't say anything about the piece before-hand. The other students say what they see and what they think. Only after that the artist gets a chance to say 'I was going for this, or I saw this here.' But of course the others don't need to agree, and this way they get to see how their work is perceived by the others. Being critiqued informs their process, as does critiquing. Creation and critique, these things don't exist in isolation from one another."

He said the same when I asked him to describe how his work as a professor informs or conflicts with his work as an artist. The two, he insisted, co-habit, and shouldn't be seen in isolation from one another.

The art department aims to give people with a particular passion, people who have the itch to create in a certain medium, the tools to actualize this interest in the multitude of forms this takes in professional and personal life. Student, teacher, critic, theorist, artist--each of these titles arise ultimately from the same impulse--they represent a number of attitudes toward the main event of creation. Through instruction in theory, technique, and history, through critiques and studio time, the department offers each student the opportunity to shape and craft themselves as artists. •

"She Was a Goddess"

CHLOE WILLIAMS
CONTRIBUTOR

Editor's Note: The College Voice editorial board supports and encourages all forms of writing, including works of fiction and poetry. If you are interested in submitting a piece of original writing for publication, please email our Arts & Entertainment editors at arts@thecollegevoice.org for information.

Daniel Jacobson had the swagger of a pubescent fourteen year old who had just learned to shave. This was because Daniel was a pubescent fourteen year old who got his first razor, a Gillette Fusion ProGlide, a week ago. But, after just one shave, Daniel had decided to grow a beard. That's what he told his friends when they asked him about the few stray hairs poking through his otherwise hairless chin. All the girls were obsessed with a new age of "lumbersexuals," anyway. He was just trying to appease the ladies, particularly the angelic Gabriella Stevens.

Gabriella Stevens was a goddess. Ever since she got her pink braces off in the seventh grade, she had become an idol. Strutting through the hallways with her best friend, Isabelle McPherson, trailing behind her, Gabriella Stevens parted the student body faster than Moses parted the Red Sea. Her golden hair cascaded down her turquoise North Face backpack and danced to the rhythm of her eclectic, *but totally cool*, collection of keychains. Each one sparkled the way her deep blue eyes did, hypnotizing every onlooker in sight. Her fashion choices were no less magnificent. As a mature young lady, Gabriella Stevens shopped at the Juniors section of Nordstrom and bought all of her gym clothes from Lululemon. Every outfit brought a new wave of fads through Edessa Middle School, from cozy heart-patterned sweaters to luxurious pleather vests. To say the least, Gabriella Stevens was a catch.

And Daniel Jacobson tried so desperately to catch her. At first, he had tried to woo her through traditional methods. When she was walking alone, he would join her. When her books were too heavy, he would carry them. When her math homework got too hard, he would do it. Daniel didn't mind that Gabriella Stevens would become the breadwinner in their relationship. She clearly had the charisma, the beauty, and the popularity to become the president of the eighth grade. The only problem was that what Gabriella Stevens and Daniel Jacobson shared was more like the relationship between a lowly serf and an, albeit charming, feudal lord.

But Daniel Jacobson soon realized that his courting methods were far too conventional for such a modern woman. It would take a certain touch to win Gabriella Stevens. Something that said "I don't need you, I just want you." And ever since first picking up, then promptly putting down, his Gillette Fusion ProGlide razor, Daniel knew exactly what he needed to become: a badass.

The transition started off with the abandonment of the Gillette Fusion ProGlide razor. Then, he stopped walking with Gabriella Stevens. He stopped carrying Gabriella Stevens' books. He even stopped doing Gabriella Stevens' math homework. But Gabriella Stevens paid no mind to such small changes. She found a new Daniel Jacobson, this one by the name of "David McPherson," Isabelle McPherson's twin brother. So, Daniel had to get more extreme. He started growing his buzzcut out into a shaggy mess. He found his father's old leather jacket in the attic and started wearing that. He even started calling himself "DJ."

But, these efforts were to no avail. Gabriella Stevens cared for DJ just as much as she did for Daniel Jacobson. DJ wasn't ready to give in, so he tried even harder. After buying a pack of Marlboro cigarettes from a high school dropout, DJ was sure that the end of his "lady problems" was approaching. On Wednesday afternoons, DJ hung out in the school parking lot with his cigarettes. He surrounded himself with the puffs of smoke, coming from like-minded men. After his first Wednesday afternoon in the group, DJ realized that he didn't want to smoke. He had a *small* fear of burning himself, after getting a first degree burn from a birthday candle when he was eight. It

was because of this fear that he never learned to use a lighter. So he couldn't exactly light his own cigarette. Of course, the other men in the group did offer to light it for him, after DJ claimed to have forgotten his lighter in his locker. To this, DJ responded by saying that his cigarette was already lit, sealing the deal by blowing out into the frosty January air. His companions should have realized that his cigarette didn't hold that glow of a lit cigarette, but they were either too dumb or too shy to point this out. Hopefully Gabriella Stevens would fall for DJ before it got too warm outside to continue the deception. Sometimes DJ wondered if the secondhand smoke was worth it. But, in those few moments when DJ watched Gabriella Stevens hop into her au pair's minivan, glancing in his direction, he knew it was worth it.

February 3rd was the day that Daniel's life changed forever. It was a normal Wednesday in almost every way that it could be. The cafeteria served its "Pasta Wednesday" pasta. The drama club met to proclaim that its newest production "would never be ready." The basketball team lost by only a few points this time. But the cold, bitter wind meant that DJ did not fake-smoke in the parking lot. Instead, he decided to take a break from his badass-ness. Report cards were coming out soon, and to say the least, his current grade in English was not satisfactory. After weaving through five different hallways, Daniel arrived at what he *thought* was the location of the English after school help, Room 245. But his mopy hair made it hard for him to see the closed shade on the door and his newfound carelessness made him forget to double-check the location of the English after school help.

Opening the door, Daniel realized that Room 245 was not the location of the English after school help. It was, however, an abandoned classroom where Gabriella Stevens and Isabelle McPherson did more than gossip about boys. Rocking back and forth to the beat of "Stay with Me" that was quietly playing out of Gabriella's bedazzled iPhone 6, Gabriella and Isabelle held each other the way that Daniel had hoped to hold Gabriella Stevens. As Isabelle rested her head on Gabriella's shoulders, she locked eyes with their audience of one. Her eyes pleaded Daniel to go, and so he did. He closed the door of Room 245, realizing that he would never catch Gabriella Stevens.

Weaving back through the hallways, Daniel tossed his pack of cigarettes in a nearby trashcan. He sat in Edessa Middle School's lobby, too broken to find the correct room for the English after school help. And he sat there, until the late bus arrived and he could leave behind the disaster of his love life.

That evening, Daniel put his dad's old leather jacket back into the attic. His mom drove him to the barber shop nearby, where he opted for a buzzcut. After returning home, Daniel took his Gillette Fusion ProGlide razor and some shaving cream out from the back of his bathroom drawer. He lathered up his face, and shaved off those few stray hairs on his chin. He went to bed that night, leaving DJ behind forever.

Or at least until Thursday. When he saw the angelic Madison Moore.

Madison Moore was a goddess. As Madison Moore flicked her wavy brunette locks, and looked in his direction, he said, "Hello, I'm DJ. Do you need some help with those books?" •



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Mariachi: A Burgeoning Cultural Intervention



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MARIACHI CONNCAMELLOS
FACEBOOK PAGE

SHATRUNJAY MALL
STAFF WRITER

Krystal Moreno '16 of Santa Ana, California first started playing Mariachi in her sophomore year of high school. A music teacher at her high school had

initially proposed starting a Mariachi band in their school, and Moreno was one of the students who immediately expressed interest. "As a third generation Mexican-American, playing Mariachi was a way for me to connect with the culture of my grandparents," she said.

From then on, Mariachi became an integral part of her high school years. "I did not, however, realize how important Mariachi had become in my life until I came to college," she said. Moving from sunny Southern California to wetter, colder New England was definitely what did it for her. Although she was still in the same country, living on the east coast was a culture shock in its own way. Moreno was especially shocked to see the status of race relations at Conn and the lack of cultural representation of minority groups.

Missing the vibrancy of traditional Mexican music and wishing to bridge the gap between different racial and ethnic groups at Conn through the power of music, Moreno decided to start a Mariachi band right here at the College, Mariachi CONNCamellos. She initially posted all over campus, especially emphasizing that "everyone was welcome to join." Mariachi is strongly associated with most Latino cultures, but it is especially connected to the culture of Mexico, a potential obstacle that Moreno particularly wished to overcome in order to attract more members. The project ultimately got off the ground in her sophomore year. There was a very positive reception on campus and enough interest to form a band of seven. The interested members came from a range of backgrounds. Further, they received initial funding from the Hispanic Studies department, an immense assistance in the early stages. There was also moral support from members of the Dining Services staff who were excited by Moreno's efforts.

Depending on the schedules of members, the band has attempted to practice for approximately two hours a week, either twice a week for one hour or once a week for

two hours. In the two years of its existence, the band has performed at various events, including events in Cro and on Tempel Green. With the support of the Admissions Office, they performed during Explore Weekend for prospective students who visited the campus, as a way of showing the cultural activities that take place at the College. Further, in the spring of 2014, the band performed for the cancer awareness and fundraising event Relay for Life. Mariachi has now become a Recognized Student Organization, or RSO, which means that SGA provides financial support for the group. It has become a part of students' cultural experience at the College.

In the future, Moreno hopes that the band can move far beyond its current achievements as an artistic organization. These include collaborating with other campus organizations such as MEChA and Eclipse, which puts up an annual artistic performance to showcase the cultures of all ethnicities. Moreno's dreams for the band, however, go far beyond the College. She hopes that the Connecticut College Mariachi Band can collaborate with the Mariachi Band from Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island. Additionally, she hopes that the band and its performances can create ties with various Latino communities in New England, and become a means to help build better ties between the College and New London, which is especially important if the College is to move beyond its reputation of being rather like a bubble, "upon a hill."

The formation and growth of Mariachi CONNCamellos provides an example of how students from underrepresented backgrounds at our predominantly white college can create and sustain events, organizations and spaces that celebrate their unique cultures and experiences while accommodating the entire campus and, indeed, the community beyond the College, in New London and elsewhere. The potential for such further diversification of the cultural experience at Connecticut College exists with the continued and expanded support of students, faculty, staff and administrators. •

Speculating on Donation Specifics

CONTINUED FROM FRONT It would be naive of us as students to expect an immediately quantifiable impact from this "largest gift in the College's history." Fran Shields, who has overseen our athletics during a measurable increase in our standings in the NESCAC, stresses that this is a gradual process. With two fall sports teams making it to the NESCAC playoff tournaments just this past weekend, we are underdogs that do well for ourselves.

One contributing factor of the athletics conference is that it is expensive to be a competitive athletic school. Operating expenses, such as travel, lodging and officiating fees, can reach the triple digits throughout a team's season. "To take a team up to Middlebury can cost up to six thousand dollars," says Shields.

The weight of these operating expenses is shouldered on a business model in which everyone is a contributor. Coaches are tasked to be fundraisers. Parents and alumni, as well as being the biggest fans, are also the most significant supporters of our athletic programs. To clarify, these are cumulative expenses that don't necessarily manifest permanently (such as new facilities) but are the fuel burned in order for our athletic programs to function.

This is a business model that isn't exclusive to athletics, or to Connecticut College specifically. Most departments on our campus have tight operating budgets that are often bolstered by government funding, specifically in the sciences. And even at older universities, departments are required to consistently press their claim to survival through fundraising or grants. A difference in our case, remarks Shields, is that our academic departments don't get ranked in the same weekly competitive framework as our athletics do.

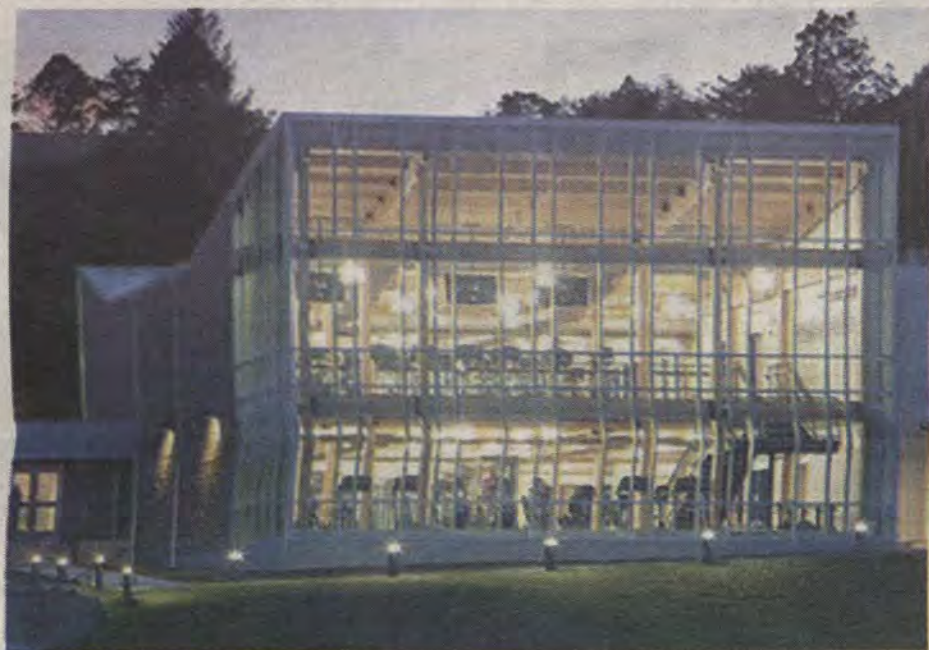
In 2009, Tufts spent \$15 million on athletics renovations, while for \$1 million Trini-

ty installed a tournament class, eight-court tennis facility. In September of 2014, Bates added a squash court through a donation of \$260,000 from alumni and parents. Williams, meanwhile, spent \$22 million to overhaul its outdoor athletic fields to create a stadium lit facility allowing for year-round, four-season sports.

The point here is that 5 million dollars could mean a hundred different things for our athletics program. It could mean world-class tennis and squash courts, or, alternatively, it could sink into the operating budget to offset team fundraising objectives. It would be impossible to definitively predict the scale and impact 5 million dollars will have. It would also be rash to determine how and where to best use it without fully assessing where it would be most helpful.

Like we've already heard, the donation is of a kind we've never experienced, and similar to the other 15 million dollars, its use hasn't yet been directly spoken for. Aside from a portion we can expect to be earmarked for the College's lacrosse program, of which Rob Hale '88 is an alum, how the rest of it will be spent is still up in the air.

Down at the AC, Shields hopes that the positive impact of the gift will be felt by the entire campus, rather than by athletes exclusively. Seeing that the money could really be spent any which way, I think we should also hope that a representative amount of student input will influence how the money gets used. In the realm of athletics, the best use of the Hale's gift will be a project, or projects, that the student body feels invested in. Ideally, this is the type of dialogue student-athlete leaders will be encouraged to participate in so, that at the end of the day, the ascent of our emerging athletics program is one we can all have been a part of. •



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CAMEL ATHLETICS

Nobody Said it'd be Easy: The Life of a Mets Fan

DAN BURNS
STAFF WRITER

It was around 10 a.m. when we had a class break while studying abroad in Vietnam. From April onwards, I lived in a time zone 11 hours ahead of my home on the East Coast. That meant prime time for New York Mets baseball was during Vietnamese class, and class breaks allowed me to check stats and scores for the Mets. The Mets performed beyond expectations in the beginning of the season, allowing them to hold the top spot for the NL East for some time. It was crazy to think of how well the Mets were doing half a world away but, at the time, I never thought the season would turn out as it did.

Admittedly, I have not always been a Mets fan. My dad is from a family of mostly Yankee fans in the forgotten borough of Staten Island. My family doesn't have hardcore Yankee fans, but just like most of the city of New York, their alliance still lies with the Bronx Bombers. Thus, I was technically raised a Yankee fan. The back of my Little League baseball card from kindergarten even listed my favorite team as the New York Yankees, a mistake I still shudder at. Luckily, I found salvation soon after the turn of the new century.

I attribute my love of the Mets to my former uncle. He bought me my first Mets jersey: a black Roberto Alomar jersey that I wore all the time, even for a school portrait picture. It was a decent time to be a Mets fan. They just appeared in the infamous Subway Series, the World Series matchup between them and the Yankees. Memorable Mets were numerous from the era: Benny Agbayani, Rey Ordonez, Al Leiter, Edgardo Alfonzo and, of course, Mike Piazza.

Being a Mets fan is not exactly a walk in the park. It's not as bad as being a Cubs fan, but it's pretty close. The Mets organization was created in 1962 as an expansion team. They've only been in the playoffs eight times since that time, winning the World Series two of those times. When your crosstown rival has won 27 World Series, it is hard to compete for attention.

Since making the World Series in 2000, the Mets have two faces: horrid, or failure to make the playoffs after a strong season. The closest the Mets got to making the World Series was in 2006 when they collapsed to the St. Louis Cardinals. I saw hope in Vietnam for the Mets, despite the fact that not a single expert from a major news source predicted the Mets would make the playoffs. At that time he Mets rotation was stellar, and Matt Harvey wasn't even a part of it yet. The Mets were atop the NL East, but a below average bullpen combined with a mostly lackluster lineup of hitters dragged down the team and

eventually caused them to lose leads and fall behind leading into the All Star Break.

Then came a roller coaster of events that would impact the rest of the Mets' season. The Mets' front office knew that, with an improved offense, the Mets could make a push for the playoffs. First came the rumor that Wilmer Flores was traded during the game to the Brewers. Flores first joined the Mets' organization when he was 16, so he has spent the majority of his life playing for the organization. He was still in the game when the rumor was broken to him, and he cried on the field. After the deal fell through, the Mets acquired hard hitter Yoenis Cespedes, and veterans such as Kelly Johnson and Juan Uribe to bring experience to the clubhouse.

After the All Star Break, everything came together for the Mets while the Nationals fell apart. Sweeping the Nationals in early September, Mets fans caught glimmers of hope to a playoff spot. With David Wright back in the clubhouse after dealing with injuries, there was no stopping the Mets' playoff run.

Clinching the NL East was a major deal. The Nationals were picked early on to win the division and even win the World Series by numerous experts. The Mets faced the Dodgers in the NLCS, which resulted in one of the most exciting series of the series. Chase Utley's undeniably dirty slide and Daniel Murphy's homers off two potential Cy Young winners defined a tight series that used up all five game slots. With Murphy continuing his six-game homer streak, the Mets swept the Cubs in four. Nothing was going to stop the Mets.

Then, the Royals showed up. The Royals didn't come off as a stellar team. They had stats near the top for batting average but were only slightly above average for most other major stat areas. Their pitching was slightly above average. There are no big names or superstars on the team. But that didn't matter. They were a clutch machine in the playoffs. The Mets actually led a much larger majority of the innings in the World Series, but the Royals' bullpen and late hitting were able to knock the Mets off in five games. Errors, poor hitting and a shitty bullpen lost the series. It was a massive disappointment after such a stellar end of season and postseason run by the Mets.

Hope is not lost. The Mets will have the deadliest rotation in April. Hitting will be an issue as free agents and injuries create uncertainty for the coming season. One thing is for sure: the Mets gave their fans a spectacular season, but just came up short in the postseason. Hopefully, the Mets will use their momentum to propel themselves into the playoffs next year. Ya gotta believe when you're a Mets fan. •

Perspectives on the NFL

Halfway Through the 2015-2016 Season

MIKE REILLY
STAFF WRITER

This has been an unusual year for the NFL. Many teams projected to go deep into the playoffs have underperformed (the Colts, Ravens and Seahawks just to name a few). There are also four teams with 7-0 records, which has never happened before.

While the Bengals, Broncos and Panthers have all looked resilient, the most dominant team by far has been the New England Patriots. They have a plus 116 point differential coming into week nine. NFL analysts knew that the Patriots would be good coming into this year, but they have looked nearly as great as they did in 2007 when they went undefeated throughout the regular season. Their offense is the most efficient in the league and their defense (which many thought would be this team's Achilles Heel) is seventh in rushing yards allowed per game and a respectable fifteenth in passing yards allowed per game. The obvious question becomes who will be able to beat the Patriots this year? There are teams remaining on their schedule that have a chance.

The clear favorite to hand the Patriots their first defeat is the Denver Broncos. The Broncos case was strengthened last week when they beat the Packers 29-10. In this game, their defense looked dominant as usual. They only allowed Aaron Rodgers to throw for 77 yards, but what really impressed me was the Broncos rushing attack. Ronnie Hillman and C.J. Anderson combined for 161 yards and three touchdowns. This improved run game took the pressure off Peyton Manning. He still threw an interception, but he looked much better than he has at points during this season. If the Broncos have a game like they had last week when they play the Patriots on Nov. 29, they will have a good chance of winning.

That week the Patriots will also have to play on short rest and in Denver. While Tom Brady doesn't lose many games, most of his losses have come on the road. With all of these factors working against them, I think it will be difficult for the Patriots to win at Denver, but if any team can do it, they can.

There are a few other teams that I think have a chance at beating the Pats if the Broncos don't manage to get it done. Maybe the Houston Texans? I only bring them up because I think that they want it more than anybody else. Don't get

me wrong, I don't think that the Texans have been good this year, but there's so much between these two teams that this would make for a great upset. The Texans have many players and coaches associated with the Patriots organization. Bill O'Brien, their head coach, was the Patriots' offensive coordinator in 2011. Starting quarterback Brian Hoyer used to play back up to Tom Brady, and long time Patriot Vince Wilfork now starts at nose tackle.

Elite receivers have burned the Patriots secondary this year. They gave up 133 yards and a touch down to Antonio Brown earlier in the year. DeAndre Hopkins has been making a case this year for his name to be considered among the top receivers in the league. The only problem is the guy throwing him the ball, Brian Hoyer, probably doesn't have what it takes to expose the flaws in the Patriots secondary. While I'm sure the Texans would love to beat the Patriots, I think it's highly unlikely that they will.

If the Patriots clinch the top seed in the AFC without losing there's a chance that they will sit key players to avoid injury, but I don't see them doing that. They are playing like they are angry with the rest of the league, and are out to prove something. If they manage to get past the Broncos, going undefeated won't be out of the question. •

COLE MITCHELL
CONTRIBUTOR

It is the first time in the NFL Super Bowl era that four teams in the NFL began the season 7-0. The New England Patriots, Cincinnati Bengals, Carolina Panthers and Denver Broncos all went into this week undefeated, and three of those teams are playing in the American Football Conference (AFC). The Carolina Panthers are the only team in the National Football Conference (NFC) that is still undefeated, and while the Green Bay Packers are right behind them, the Panthers have a 44% chance of being the first seed in their conference for the playoffs. Besides the New England Patriots, the other three undefeated teams rely on a strong and tough defense to win games.

This is the second time in franchise history the Patriots are 8-0 and they look just as good as the 2007 team. The offense is, of course, led by four-time Super Bowl champion and three-time Super Bowl MVP, Tom Brady. He has thrown 22 touchdown passes this season with two interceptions. The Patriots offense lives off holding onto the football. The Patriots have a total of five turnovers so far this season and none of their turnovers have happened at home. Gillette Stadium is already a very challenging place to compete, so when the Pats are doing a great job of protecting the football, they are almost unbeatable at home.

The defense for the Patriots has held up through most of their games this season. They have a total of nine interceptions on the season and Chandler Jones has become a real pass-rushing threat. On Nov. 8, the Patriots continued their undefeated streak by defeating the Washington Redskins, 27-10.

The Denver Broncos and quarterback Peyton Manning have a very stout defense. In my opinion, they are the most unimpressive team on this list. Peyton Manning has thrown more interceptions than touchdowns, and, unlike all the other teams on this list, their offense has no strength. Manning is getting old and his defense is carrying him to a win each week.

Defensively, they are historically one of the greatest groups the NFL has ever seen. Demarcus Ware is the leader of the defense, and they have great pass rush and a strong secondary that would scare any quarterback. The Broncos fell flat to the Colts this Sunday, losing 27-24 in Manning's old stomping ground of Indianapolis. Still, with their defense, they are a top contender in the AFC.

The Cincinnati Bengals are 8-0 for the first time in their franchise history and the combination of their defense and quarterback,

who for once is not turning the football over, has led them to a winning record. The Bengals have been recognized in the recent years as having a very strong defense. They have consistently had one of the best pass rushing defensive lines in the NFL.

The defense was not a problem going into the season this year, it was the quarterback. Andy Dalton has always had a knack for throwing the ball to the wrong uniform, which in turn has led to a lot of undesired losses. This year, Andy Dalton has refrained from throwing as many interceptions, only four, and has also thrown 18 touchdowns this season. The Bengals do not need a quarterback to lead them to wins by scoring a large amount of points; they need a QB that will not turn the football over and Dalton has done just that. The Bengals are going to be as good as their quarterback is at making sure he holds onto the football.

The NFC only has one team that is still 8-0. The Carolina Panthers have dominated their NFC south division with a defense led by the best linebacker in the NFL, Luke Kuechly. Cam Newton is a decent quarterback who does not have good receivers to consistently throw the football to, so the team is very good at running the football. The team prides itself on a strong running game and a great defense. They defend the run amazingly well and defend any passing offense even better.

Luke Kuechly, out of Boston College, is the leader of the Panthers and believes that they do not win pretty, which shows when they win by three points in the rain in Carolina. On Sunday, the Panthers beat their toughest opponent of the season, the Green Bay Packers, to keep rolling.

Halfway into the season, it looks like NFC will be a battle between the Green Bay Packers and the Carolina Panthers for the first overall seed and home field advantage when battling for Super Bowl contention. In the AFC right now there are three different teams-Denver, New England and Cincinnati- that will battle over the first place seed, and although we are only half way through the season home field advantage is always something important to consider. •

A Game We'll Never Forget

JOHN CUNNINGHAM
STAFF WRITER

For the second year in a row, a Connecticut College soccer team defeated Williams College in NESCAC playoff action, and in penalty kicks nonetheless. This year it was the men's turn, defeating Williams College on Saturday, Oct. 31 at Harkness Field, in front of a large and rowdy crowd of students, as well as parents and faculty. The year before it was the women who beat Williams in penalty kicks in the NESCAC championship at their own field. The victory against Williams is the men's team's second straight NESCAC quarterfinal win. The year before they upset the NCAA DIII first-seed Tufts University before falling to Amherst College.

The game against Williams is one that will go down in the Connecticut College history books. The Camels went up by two goals early in the game, but Williams charged back and scored three straight goals. It was only in the remaining seconds of regulation that your Connecticut College Camels were able to tie the game up. The team then held on in overtime to force penalty kicks. There were several heroes that game, and every player on the team and every fan helped contribute to the team's success.

The first goal of the game was scored by first-year sensation Chris Lockwood, who has shined during his first year in the NESCAC. "[Matt] Bitchell '16 shot it and the goalie saved it, but it fell right into my path. I jumped in the air and shot it. The shot hit the crossbar and time stopped, but then it went in and everything was all good," said Lockwood. As a member of the crowd, it is safe to say that everything was more than just "all good" at the time. Bitchell streaked 75 yards up the field chasing after a ball played towards the box faster than I have ever seen a man run, and although the goalie made the initial save on his shot, Lockwood was able to bury the rebound off the crossbar. He was certainly right in saying that time stopped as the ball hit the crossbar, but the crowd sighed in relief as the ball crossed the goal line and the students went wild for Lockwood, Bitchell and the rest of the Camels.

The Camels' second goal came off the efforts of some familiar names. This time it was Lockwood who had the assist and Bitchell who scored the goal. Unfortunately for the Camels, the momentum did not carry into the second half. Williams scored the next three goals of the game, and took the late lead, with only 15 minutes remaining in the game. It wasn't until there were only 30 seconds or so left in the game that Conn found its opportunity. A foul just outside Williams' box led to a game-changing free kick.

The anticipation and panic in the crowd was electric. The clock was never stopped and time continued to tick while the referee set up the kick. It seemed as if the Camels weren't going to even get the kick off, but the referee finally stopped the clock with ten seconds left. Colin Patch '16, the team's best free kick and penalty kick player, stepped up. It could have been a scene from a movie: Patch stepped up and bent the ball around the wall of Williams' players. As it headed towards the goal, time seemed to stop, and the Williams goaltender was able to get a hand on the ball just enough to deflect it into the post, where it bounced in front of the net and into a mad scramble. Legs kicked, bodies were everywhere and from the student cheering section all you could see was the ball cross the line. The crowd went absolutely wild. The Connecticut College bench went absolutely wild. Fran Shields went absolutely wild. The entire campus went wild. Then we all realized that there was still overtime to play, and the entire campus got really nervous.

Eventually we found out that sophomore Graham Koval scored the goal. "Pat

[Devlin] and I were unmarked on the back post ready to crash the goal for a rebound," he said. "Patch struck the free kick very well and when the keeper saved the ball off the post it was about getting the second ball in the box ... I was in the right place at the right time with six seconds left to send us to overtime. It was a great team effort to give us a chance at tying the game and it showed our resilience and character coming from behind from giving up a two-goal advantage. It is definitely the most important goal I have ever scored, surpassing the playoff goal against Tufts last year. It was an amazing feeling to share the moment with the squad and all of the amazing fans that were at the first ever home NESCAC playoff game of our program's history."

In overtime, both teams played tentatively, making sure that their team wasn't the one that made the game-losing mistake. When overtime ended and penalty kicks began, the fans were so excited that they had to be removed from behind the goals and restrained to the side of the field.

First it was junior Charlie Overton's turn to kick. Feeling confident before his kick he even pumped the crowd up with some gestures, and buried the ball into the back of the net. "Thank God that went in," he recalled, "I would have looked real dumb if I didn't score that one, huh?"

After that goal the first Williams player got up to kick, and all eyes fell on junior goalkeeper Austin DaCunha, who stepped up big time and made a diving save on the first kick. The crowd went ballistic. After that save, senior Daniel Adair got up and finished his kick, along with the Williams player who followed him.

In the third round, things got quite scary when Patch's shot was saved and Williams scored their attempt. Now the score was tied two to two. Thankfully, sophomore Nate Summers took his kick confidently and buried in the center of the net, making the score three to two. It was now DaCunha's turn to shine. He stood tall in net and made a huge save. The crowd absolutely lost it. People were throwing their drinks in the air (none of the alcoholic variety of course) and cheering his name.

Now it all came down to Devlin. If he scored his goal the game would be over. And that is exactly what he did. He buried his shot into the side netting and the fans charged the field. There was a massive pile up in the center of the field and unfortunately in the mayhem I lost my shades and my hat (if anyone finds them, please let me know).

After the game, DaCunha said, "It's always unfortunate to see a game end in penalty kicks. Credit to Williams though, they fought back after going down early. They are a great program and we always enjoy playing against them. In regard to the saves though, shootouts are all about trusting your gut. When a guy approaches the ball there are a few things that I look for to guess what side he's shooting to. But at the end of the day, you just pick a side and have to commit to it. Fortunately, our guys did their part and put away their chances. It was an incredible game that we'll never forget."

When asked about his game winning penalty kick, Devlin said, "I can't even describe it. It was so exciting, an unreal feeling. I have to give credit to Austin DaCunha. I could not have done it without him and the other guys on the team. It was just fantastic support."

Though this game is one for the history books, the Men's Soccer team fell to Bowdoin 2-0 the following Saturday, Nov. 7. The Camels led the game in shots, with seven to Bowdoin's four, but couldn't find the back of the net. Though it was a disappointing end, the 2015 season set a new high for the future of the team. •



Congratulations to all Fall sports teams on your great seasons!

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